

# WEST YORKSHIRE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

DATE: 27 MARCH 2009

AGENDA ITEM NO: **21**

SUBJECT: NATIONAL RAIL INITIATIVES

## Report of the Passenger Transport Executive

### 1. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION

- 1.1 This report considers opportunities as a result of the development of a national rail electrification strategy and the long term development of national high speed rail routes.

### 2. INFORMATION

#### Rail Electrification

- 2.1 Metro and partners recognise the benefit of rail electrification (for example the hugely successful Airedale and Wharfedale lines in West Yorkshire) and demonstrated that this should be a key component of the City Region Transport Vision (launched in 2006).
- 2.2 Growing concerns about climate change together with the cost and security of energy have influenced thinking about further electrification of the national rail network. In response to the growing business and environmental case, the Government has recognised the potential for a rolling programme of electrification.
- 2.3. Recent development work has resulted in an announcement that the Midland Main Line (MML) from Bedford to Sheffield and the Great Western Main Line from London to Bristol and South Wales are to be established as the first stages of a potential national electrification strategy.
- 2.4. In the light of this Metro has undertaken an assessment of strategic electrification options that could build upon the emerging national electrification framework. This work was carried out in conjunction with South Yorkshire PTE and identified the optimal extension of the proposed MML electrification scheme together with potential 'infill' schemes that would provide benefits to both the Leeds and Sheffield City Regions and link with proposals set out in the vision. A more detailed strategy is under development and will be considered by the Authority's Rail Working Group.

## High Speed Rail

- 2.5. In parallel with the electrification development work, a group chaired by Transport Minister Lord Adonis is examining various options for developing a series of national high speed routes. The new lines would aim to release capacity on the existing network and provide an opportunity to enhance local, regional and freight services.
- 2.6 This Group is tasked with providing clarity on strategic goals and objectives in key corridors and it will develop policy options that relate to making best use of existing networks, expanding electrification, developing high speed rail routes and enabling better integration of aviation hubs. It has also set up a company called High Speed 2 (HS2) to provide technical and engineering advice on any route options. Current HS2 proposals include a Heathrow 'hub' with a connection to London and a high speed link with Birmingham as the potential 'first phase' of a high speed rail network between London, 'the North' and, possibly Scotland. Metro is seeking to ensure that such options include high speed links to/from the Leeds City Region.
- 2.7 Metro and the other ITAs are also working with 'Greengauge 21', a 'not for profit' organisation established to research and develop the concept of a high speed rail network, and to promote its implementation as a national economic priority. Recently, Greengauge 21 suggested that the most likely candidate for Britain's second high speed route (now referred to as High Speed 2) would involve a North West Corridor route connecting central London (and High Speed 1 – the recently completed high speed link between London St Pancras and the Channel Tunnel) with Birmingham and the North West. Greengauge 21 has suggested that an ability to serve Heathrow Airport is important.
- 2.8 Fundamental issues being considered at the moment include the choice of cities that any of these routes might serve together with how those cities might be best served. Current thinking also suggests that a high speed rail network needs to serve places that are capable of stimulating economies to achieve growth, recovery, regeneration and wider productivity benefits.
- 2.9 Metro working with city region partners, proposes to take an active role within the High Speed 2 initiative and, where possible, seek appropriate opportunities to influence the work with a view to ensuring that any future high speed rail link proposal is developed to serve the needs of the city region.

## Next Steps

- 2.10 A short document is being prepared by Metro in order to seek to influence government and industry thinking. This will set out how important both electrification and a high speed rail link to Yorkshire are to the future economic growth of the Leeds City Region and the north of England.

**3. FINANCIAL AND EC PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 None arising from this report.

**4. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None arising from this report.

**5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None arising from this report.

**6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.1 That the report be noted.

6.2 That members support the development of proposals to deliver further electrification and high speed rail routes that serve the city region.

Director General  
West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive